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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

26 July 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director for Central Intelligence

VIA : Robert R. Bowie
Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment

Richard Lehman
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM : [REDACTED] 25X1
Assistant National Intelligence Officer for USSR-EE

SUBJECT : Monthly Warning Assessment: USSR-EE

Summary

Community analysts at their 17 July meeting saw increasing evidence of Soviet inclination to try to resolve the Afghan civil war dilemma by taking more vigorous efforts to broaden the regime. The GDR Ambassador in Kabul has warned of Soviet plans to engineer a "radical change" in the Afghan government that would unseat Prime Minister Amin. Amin and Taraki have publicly indicated awareness of some such Soviet intrigue and an inclination to resist. Analysts were divided in opinion as to whether the Soviets have sufficient political and military leverage in Kabul to bring off such a change in the face of Amin-Taraki resistance. [REDACTED]

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1. Afghanistan: Community analysts saw increasing evidence of Soviet inclination to try to resolve the dilemma created by the civil war by taking more vigorous efforts to broaden the regime. The most striking such evidence was received after the warning meeting, in statements by the GDR Ambassador in Kabul to the US charge to the effect that Moscow is planning to engineer a "radical change" in the Afghan government within the next six weeks that would unseat Prime Minister Amin. Some subsequent public statements by Amin and Taraki have suggested their awareness of some such Soviet intrigue and their inclination to resist. There is some division of opinion among specialists as to whether the Soviets have quite enough

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political and military leverage in Kabul to bring off a "radical change" in the face of such Amin-Taraki resistance.

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The meeting also again considered the conflicting evidence bearing on the possibility of direct Soviet military intervention.

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Almost all community analysts continued to doubt that if worse came to worst, the Soviets would undertake the very large and open-ended military operation that would probably be necessary, and that the Soviets would probably think necessary. One analyst suggested that the Soviets might already be intervening in force without US knowledge through the covert use of Afghan-speaking Soviet Central Asian troops. Most others strongly doubted this, noting that if this was the case, these alleged Soviet combat efforts were remarkably ineffective, since the security situation as a whole was continuing to deteriorate.

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In sum, the community consensus reaffirmed that the possibility of major Soviet combat intervention must be carefully watched and evaluated on a continuing basis, despite strong majority doubts that the Soviets would take this step. At the same time, the consensus felt that the Soviet effort to force a drastic broadening of the regime for the time being has priority in the Soviet mind.

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2. Sino-Soviet: There is considerable evidence of increasing Soviet skepticism about Chinese intentions regarding normalization, in view of growing signs that the Chinese intend, when Sino-Soviet talks eventually convene, to raise specific unacceptable demands and charges of "hegemony" against the Soviets. While some marginal improvements from the talks still seem possible, the likelihood of a significant reduction of Sino-Soviet antagonism is rapidly receding. Against this background, the revelation since the warning meeting that an unusual shooting incident on the Sino-Soviet border had occurred in July while the diplomatic sparring over the talks was going on raises the possibility that Soviet border forces may be taking a more pugnacious attitude, and indicates a need for continued close community attention to the chance of further frontier clashes.

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- 2 -

TOP SECRET

25X1

26 July 1979

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- 3 -

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